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ABSTRACT

This handbook is designed to help instructors and advisory committees interact effectively in the Partners in Program Excellence (PIPE) system. It describes a way to keep a local advisory committee involved throughout the life of the training program. The handbook takes the instructor and the advisory committee through the 10 activities into which the PIPE system divides the work of program improvement: identify major objectives of the program, develop a public relations and marketing plan, plan and implement curriculum, determine capability to implement curriculum, plan instructional strategies, develop procedures for determining the effectiveness of instruction, plan student placement strategies, assess overall program effectiveness, identify and plan needed program modifications, and submit program progress summary. Each activity is composed of four components: introduction, suggestions (sample tasks, objectives, strategies, and general considerations offered as possible approaches to the activity), developing the plan (discussion, decisions, and tasks undertaken by the instructor and program advisory committee), and case story (illustrations of how cooperative efforts have resulted in program improvement). Appendixes include material on working effectively with the program advisory committee and forms and transparency masters. (YLB)

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PARTNERS in PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

Instructor Handbook

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PARTNERS in PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

Instructor Handbook

State of Florida
Department of Education
Betty Castor, Commissioner
Tallahassee, Florida
Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education

April 1988

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Preface

The idea for Partners in Program Excellence came about when the State Program Director for Industrial Education learned from various industry contacts that potential employees did not always possess sufficient skills required for local jobs. Administrators understood these concerns but knew that the schools had various problems of their own. Equipment, instructional materials, and student supplies were badly needed. In some districts, a substantial drop in new enrollments had resulted in a reduction of the instructional force.

It was clear that schools and businesses wanted the same thing—quality vocational and occupational training programs that could attract more students and better prepare them for real jobs in their communities. To reach that goal, education and industry needed a way to work out mutual concerns at the local program level. Although many active, dedicated program advisory committees had made significant contributions to their local programs, an improved system was needed to guide their efforts. Fortunately, the Printing Industries of Florida was willing to lend support for developing a new system. Representatives from this trade association and from the Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education (DVACE) got together with the State Technical Committee for Industrial Education, a statewide advisory group. Over the course of several meetings the Partners in Program Excellence (PIPE) system was born.

The meetings were an excellent opportunity for educators, state administrators, and business and industry personnel not only to discuss the issues that most affected them but to offer suggestions and solutions for more effective partnerships. The developers of the PIPE system drew on these ideas and discussions, incorporating them into a plan to implement a number of recommendations made by the Florida Commission on Vocational Education. They were particularly committed to laying the foundation for tangible activities that would keep local advisory committees involved throughout the life of the training program.

This handbook is the direct result of that commitment. It is designed to help instructors and advisory committees interact effectively. It is not a mandated set of procedures but a way to guide the advisory committee through a plan of action for program improvement.

The Partners In Program Excellence System

We hear a lot about partnerships these days. The concept of cooperation between education and business and industry is not new. The Presidential Board of Advisors on Private Sector Initiatives has estimated that 60,000 business-sponsored activities are currently underway in our nation's schools. Virtually every school in the U.S. is receiving assistance of *some* kind from at least *some* members of the local business community. At your own program level, you have probably done some work with the business and industry representatives on your local program advisory committee. Why, then, do we need the Partners in Program Excellence (PIPE) system?

Updating vocational/occupational programs to keep up with advancing technologies, new business methods, and changing local needs is a complex process that requires a multi-faceted approach. A single business-sponsored project might benefit the program in only one way. An employer-student banquet, for example, can help students make potential job contacts, but such public relations efforts will mean little if the students are not being trained in locally needed skills. On the other hand, industry participation may result in more relevant training, but will that be followed up with information and support for job placement? The PIPE system stresses the importance of local advisory committee involvement in *all* areas of program improvement.

The Partners in Program Excellence system is also a model for effective interaction between you and your committee members. If you have previously had difficulty organizing group action for maximum gain, you will welcome the organizational structure provided by the ten PIPE activities. Using the system as a guide, your partnership can develop a plan of action that is tailored to your vocational/occupational program and that makes the most of the time and talents of everyone involved.

This structure also fosters ongoing participation and brings a sense of continuity to the program improvement agenda. The developers of the system recognized the need to review and refine the vocational/occupational program throughout its existence; the PIPE format is really a network of activities designed for that purpose. Furthermore, as your committee membership changes or as you encounter new needs and problems, you will not have to start back at square one. With the PIPE system, you will already have an established structure for orienting new members, setting goals, making decisions, and planning action.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, Partners in Program Excellence encourages *local* action. This means that you, the instructor, and your program advisory committee members, the people from your community who best understand the needs of local business and industry, can work for change at the program level.

How To Use This Handbook

The Partners in Program Excellence system divides the work of program improvement into ten activities. This handbook takes you and your advisory committee through the activities in the following order:

1. Identify the major objectives of the program.
2. Develop a public relations and marketing plan.
3. Plan and implement curriculum.
4. Determine capability to implement curriculum.
5. Plan instructional strategies.
6. Develop procedures for determining the effectiveness of instruction.
7. Plan student placement strategies.
8. Assess overall program effectiveness.
9. Identify and plan needed program modifications.
10. Submit program progress summary.

Each activity is composed of four parts leading to a specific plan of action which you and your advisory committee will formulate. The first three parts provide a background that you can cover briefly before developing your own plan. The four activity components are explained below.

1. *Introduction.* This describes the activity and explains its purpose and importance. It is an indication of what you and your committee can expect to achieve.

2. *Suggestions.* These are sample tasks, objectives, strategies, and general considerations offered as possible approaches to the activity. These suggestions were provided by local program advisory committee members, vocational/occupational educators, and various business and industry representatives during the initial stages of the PIPE system's development. They are by no means exhaustive; you will no doubt come up with many more ideas during the course of your work. They may also not be applicable to every program. However, they can provide a useful starting point for planning. You may wish to make copies of the suggestions for committee members.

3. *Developing Your Plan.* This is the real heart of each activity—the discussion, decisions, and tasks undertaken by you and the program advisory committee. The action you carry out is up to you; this section is merely a guide for organizing your efforts. It offers suggestions for background material to be reviewed and factors to be considered.

Your working plan might begin with some of the suggestions and case stories or it might be generated entirely by ideas brought up in your meetings. In either case, as you develop goals and tasks, it will be helpful if you ask yourselves the following questions for each activity:

- What is already established in the vocational/occupational program and how can the program advisory committee help to improve it?
- What new ideas and practices can be brought into the existing program and how can the committee members help to implement them?

After you have decided on general objectives and approaches to each activity, you can formulate specific tasks for achieving your goals. Plan of Action forms help you organize and coordinate committee actions and keep track of results. A blank Plan of Action form is provided in Appendix B. Make as many copies of these as you need. The appendix also provides a sample form, partially filled in to show its use. If you review a form now, you will see how it provides space to answer the following key questions for each task:

- What will be done?
- Why is it being done? What will be achieved by this action?
- Who will do it?
- When will it be completed?
- What are the important follow-up tasks or information?
- What are the results of this action?

Once the plan of action for an activity has been implemented and the goal of that activity attained, provide a written copy of the results (objectives, events, program changes) to all committee members and, as necessary, to school administrators. One copy should also be kept in your program files. These statements will be an important record of your partnership work and useful for periodic program review.

4. *Case Story.* The stories compiled for this handbook illustrate how cooperative efforts between educators and strong, active advisory committees in Florida have resulted in program improvement.

Summary of suggested steps to take for each activity

1. Use the *Introduction* to each activity to emphasize the activity's importance and to indicate its desired result.
2. Review *Suggestions* and discuss their applicability to your program.
3. Review background material (reports, statistics, assessments) relevant to the activity and your program.
4. Consider the following two key questions:
   - How can the committee help to improve what is already in the program?
   - How can the committee help to implement new ideas and practices?
5. Solicit ideas, comments, questions from everyone at the meeting, keeping notes of all suggestions and opinions.

6. Use the details of the *Case Story* to generate discussion about possible approaches to the activity.
7. Determine tasks to undertake to accomplish the goal of the activity.
8. Keep track of tasks and results on Plan of Action form.
9. Follow up on tasks until their completion.
10. Make recommendations or reports to school officials based on results of the activity.
11. Keep records of completed tasks, decisions, and program changes or improvements.

Orientation

The first step in the process is to introduce the Partners in Program Excellence system to the program advisory committee. The steps listed here will help you plan an orientation. All the information you will need for discussion and explanation is in the brochure, the slide-tape presentation, and the introductory section of this handbook. Transparency masters (TM) are provided in Appendix B to facilitate the orientation.

1. Ask each member to read the brochure.
2. Show the slide-tape presentation. (Optional. Slide-tape sets are available through regional or state DVACE offices.)
3. Discuss the objectives of the PIPE system. (TM 1)
4. Discuss advantages of using the system. (TM 2)
5. Present the PIPE system activity structure. (TM 3)
6. Emphasize the benefits to be gained from committee action for program improvement. (TM 4)
7. Solicit comments and questions.

The Partners in Program Excellence System Activities

I. Identify the Major Objectives and Purposes of the Vocational/ Occupational Program
II. Develop a Public Relations and Program Marketing Plan
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IV. Determine Capability to Implement Curriculum
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I. Identify The Major Objectives and Purposes of the Vocational/Occupational Program

Introduction

The first step in the partnership process is to define the purpose of the educational program. A clear understanding of what the program should accomplish will help the advisory committee develop a constructive plan of action. This activity helps identify the educational objectives specific to your local needs. When you have completed this step you will have more than a general statement of the type of training to be provided; you will have goals for your program and a direction for future activities.

Suggestions

- Provide specialized, up-to-date training in skills needed for work in local business and industry.
- Serve as a facility for supplementary training and technical updating of currently employed workers.
- Provide support to develop the abilities of the developmentally and physically disabled and the economically disadvantaged.
- Develop leadership, social, and employability skills in students.
- Encourage student participation in skill events and other vocational student organization activities.
- Acquaint students with and prepare them to function in the American free enterprise system.
- Develop in students the written and oral communication skills needed to obtain a job.
- Prepare students to meet the requirements of licensing and certification for an occupation, if applicable.

Developing Your Plan

Before identifying objectives for your particular program, the advisory committee should be aware of the general objectives for the school. Supply each member with a written copy of these and review them carefully. Your program objectives should agree as much as possible with those of your school; avoid contradicting its stated goals.

You can start developing your objectives by focusing on the needs of local business and industry. (The committee may want to conduct a detailed community needs assessment to provide up-to-date information about the local job market.) Your advisory committee members are well qualified to answer such questions as:

- What do local companies expect of new employees in this field?
- Are business and industry hiring program completers? In what numbers? What can be done to increase that amount?
- What specialized skills are most needed in the current job market?
- What skills and individual qualities will employees need for the future?
- How can training keep up with advancing technology?
- How many new employees will be needed locally every year?

It is also vitally important to consider the needs and expectations of students. The committee should discuss the following questions:

- What do students expect from vocational/occupational training?
- What skills will they need to get work in the occupational area?
- How can the program best teach those skills?
- What help will students need to meet licensing and certification requirements?
- What measures can be taken to ensure successful completion of the program?
- What verbal, leadership, and social skills will be needed for successful employment and how can the program develop those skills?

As you and your committee prepare the objectives, keep in mind two factors.

1. Be sure many of the objectives are stated in terms of student achievement.
2. Be sure the objectives reflect the needs of business and industry and the community at large.

When you are satisfied that you have a good set of objectives for your program, print copies for your files, school files, and for members' use. Refer to them often as you take on the activities that follow.

Case Story

Faced with dramatic changes in the local labor market and workplace, representatives of education, business, and industry in Taylor County recognized the need for a partnership. Industry wanted education to help update current employees in millwright skills. Education needed industry's knowledge to plan training for future employees. The BIGS (Business-Industry-Government-Student) Advisory Council was organized in response to these needs.

The goal of the program developed by the council is to provide technician training that meets the local demand for workers who can build, operate, repair, and maintain complex manufacturing systems. The goal will be achieved by the realization of several objectives set by the partnership.

- **Training will include the state-approved core basics and an advanced technology curriculum proposed by industry.**
- **Students will receive instruction in leadership, employability, and safety skills.**
- **Technical updating will be provided for current industry workers.**
- **Business and industry will be encouraged to provide incentives for students.**

Clearly defined objectives developed by an active partnership have resulted in a program its planners call "Taylor-made." State-of-the-art training is made possible by curriculum input from industry representatives. Some local companies are already guaranteeing preferential hiring for program completers. For more information, contact the Director of Vocational Education, Taylor County School District, P.O. Box 509, Taylor County Courthouse, Perry, FL 32347.

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II. Develop A Public Relations and Program Marketing Plan

Introduction

Your committee members with business experience can attest to the value of marketing. Promotional activities directed to potential students, local companies, and members of the community are as important to the success of the program as the improvements you make in it.

Your partnership is an ideal way to carry out student recruitment strategies. Business and industry members of the advisory committee can promote the benefits of a career in their occupational field. Instructors can give information and advice about the program and the school. Working together, you should be able to answer any question put forth by potential students and their families.

A good marketing plan should also spotlight your program to potential employers. This increases the likelihood of job placements for your students and encourages local companies to offer resources and support. You may even hear from other business and industry leaders who want to become involved in your activities.

Finally, media attention and community awareness of both the program and your partnership reinforce a sense of pride and provide incentives for continued achievement.

Suggestions

- Hold an open house and orientation for guidance counselors and occupational specialists.
- Develop a media campaign to include brochures, posters, and newspaper, radio, and television ads.
- Hold an open house for prospective students and their families.
- Set up a program exhibit and demonstration of student skills in shopping centers or at county fairs.
- Hold an annual banquet where students can meet potential employers.
- Publicize student and program accomplishments.
- Enlist industry personnel and students in the recruitment process.
- Produce a videotape or other audiovisual presentation about the program and make it available to schools, businesses, and civic groups.

Developing Your Plan

This outline provides three steps for developing a public relations plan and factors to consider for each area. Solicit a number of suggestions and ideas for each step. When you have decided on promotional tasks, list them on the Plan of Action form.

1. Target your audience.
   a. prospective students
      1) high school graduates who want to continue their education

2) employed and unemployed workers who need to upgrade their skills
3) displaced homemakers seeking new careers
4) people with special needs
5) non-English speakers who wish to enter the labor market

b. the community
1) business and industry people
2) others who will be receptive to program news as determined by community assessment survey

2. Plan your message.
a. benefits of training and value of successful program completion
b. amount and type of information needed to make informed decisions about educational opportunities
c. benefits to community
1) more effective use of educational tax dollars
2) future of local businesses and labor market

3. Determine your resources.
a. committee member(s) with public relations experience
b. committee member(s) with writing or video skills
c. connections with local media
d. businesses willing to sponsor events
e. existing school or community events where student and program accomplishments can be spotlighted

Case Story

The Bay County Marketing and Distributive Education Advisory Committee sponsors a number of projects for students in the school district's three high schools. For many years the committee worked closely with DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) on a holiday project known as "Little World." Supported by the management of a local shopping mall and using facilities donated by the committee, marketing education students sold Christmas gifts to children under twelve. The "shoppers" bought their packages inside a little castle, staffed entirely by students. The profits from the sales went to selected local charities.

Student participation and program visibility have also been increased by the annual "Free Enterprise Breakfast," an opportunity for students to get together with local business people. The event, held on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, has been sponsored by a local automobile dealership.

As you can see from this story, promotional events such as these bring recognition to students, school programs and organizations, committee members and activities, and local businesses. For more information: Director of Vocational Education, Bay County School District, P.O. Drawer 820, Panama City, FL 32402.

III. Plan and Implement Curriculum

Introduction

Planning and implementing the curriculum for the vocational/occupational program is one of the most important activities you will undertake in the Partners in Program Excellence process. Even in programs with established curricula, the committee members can provide valuable assistance in reviewing and interpreting the student performance standards and in identifying additional training competencies that should be included. Their input is crucial to developing training that prepares students adequately for the labor market.

Before beginning, it is a good idea to familiarize the members with certain terms and concepts common to vocational education. Some definitions are given below to enhance their understanding of the process.

Competency: a description of the ability one possesses when able to perform a given occupational task.

Curriculum framework: a set of broad statewide guidelines for producing specific instructional plans in a subject area. Frameworks were developed to promote a degree of uniformity in curriculum offerings throughout the state of Florida.

Intended outcomes: a broad statement identifying essential competencies needed to perform selected tasks in a subject area. They are specified in the curriculum framework to develop uniform statewide student performance standards and assessment measures.

Student performance standards: a statement which reflects expected student achievement as related to an outcome of a specific curriculum framework.

Task list: the duties and tasks performed by workers in a given occupation, usually verified by workers and/or supervisors. Lists may include an analysis of the steps, related knowledge, attitudes, performance standards, tools and materials needed, and safety measures required of workers performing each task.

Suggestions

- Examine and review in detail the student performance standards and determine what must be done to implement the instructional program.
- Add or delete competencies as needed in order to modify the student performance standards to meet unique local needs and to fulfill the objectives of the program.
- Develop effective performance measures that constitute mastery of each competency.
- Establish a logical sequence of instruction.
- Establish time estimates required for satisfactory completion of each phase of the program.
- Develop, review, or select student materials and instructional aids.

Developing Your Plan

To reduce the time and workload involved in planning the curriculum, you can form subcommittees to make reports and recommendations based on assessments of various background materials. Use the Plan of Action form to keep track of which members are doing each review. The following are suggested subcommittee efforts:

- *Program objectives.* Review the objectives set in Activity I. Does the current or proposed curriculum fulfill the goals of the program?
- *Curriculum framework and student performance standards.* Review the existing intended outcomes of the program. Does your program conform to these standards? Are students receiving the training in the competencies listed? Are these standards up-to-date with current industry standards? Do they meet local employment needs?
- *Textbooks and instructional materials.* Do they represent state-of-the-art knowledge? Are they effective learning tools?
- *Business and industry task lists.* What skills are needed for work in the occupational area? Task lists should be evaluated carefully by the entire committee and compared to the student performance standards and curriculum framework.

With this background work completed, the committee should formalize their curriculum recommendations. Consider the examples listed in the Suggestions section of this activity, adding concerns specific to your own program. Keep in mind the following factors in planning the instructional outline:

- Identify the specific objectives of the curriculum, including essential attitudes, skills, and knowledge.
- State outcomes intended to enhance mental process skills such as creative and critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving.
- State objectives in terms of student performance. Identify specifically what the student is expected to do.

Committee members should have copies of the final curriculum proposals for further review and refinement. When you present the plan to school administrators, include a statement explaining the findings and decisions.

Case Story

This story has been chosen to illustrate the steps an advisory committee can take when an existing curriculum is not meeting the needs of the local job market. A boatbuilding program had been operating for over a year at McFatter Vo-Tech in Davie, training students in woodworking, some fiberglass work, and in building small marine vessels from scratch. Unfortunately, businesses in the Fort Lauderdale area were looking elsewhere for workers who knew more about repair and refinishing of yachts and large boats. The owner of a large yachting center contacted county vocational

education specialists, hoping to encourage them to make program changes that would make the training more relevant to a community that was, in his words, "built on the boating industry."

With the support of the Broward County School District, a new program advisory committee was organized (the previous one was more geared to the marine mechanics program). Members included not only local industry representatives but the Dockmaster for the City of Fort Lauderdale, the Executive Director of the Marine Industries Association of South Florida, and the publisher of the Waterfront News, a monthly newspaper about events and businesses of the area's waterfront. At their first meeting in December, 1987, the members began the task of rewriting the curriculum. The steps they took provide a model for this activity (although it is generally suggested that community needs assessments be carried out first). They are as follows:

1. *Choosing a course name.* The choice of a name reflects the direction the course will take. Furthermore, the name directly affects the attractiveness of the program for potential students. In this step it was decided what prospective employees were most needed and what kind of training they would receive. This discussion led to consideration of the general program objectives. The course title was narrowed from the original suggestion, "Marine Trades: Repair and Refinishing," to the more specific "Boat and Yacht Refinishing/Repair."
2. *Listing job titles.* The committee's industry representatives named and described the various entry-level jobs in the boat refinishing and repair field. The discussion then targeted the local jobs for which employees were most needed. It was suggested that an assessment survey would yield even greater detail. As head of a professional group with industry-wide contacts, the Director of the Marine Association was the ideal person to organize this effort.
3. *Discussing training competencies.* The next logical step was to determine what the industry expects the program completer to be able to do. The Director of McFatter Vo-Tech led the members through an examination of the existing student performance standards, assessing each competency for its relevance to the new program objectives.
4. *Developing intended outcomes.* The members decided that the best approach to this would be to form subcommittees for writing new frameworks. This task was divided according to the particular areas of specialty of each member.

For more information about the progress of the committee and the program, contact the Director of Vocational Education, Broward County School District, 701 S. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316.

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IV. Determine Capability To Implement Curriculum

Introduction

Once the curriculum has been set, the next logical step is to examine the program's capability to implement it. In this activity, the program advisory committee evaluates available resources and identifies those that are needed. This prepares the committee to investigate ways to implement the curriculum despite a lack of resources. If the facilities, equipment, and training materials are inadequate, the program will be unable to meet its objectives.

Suggestions

These sample tasks are provided as preliminary steps for evaluating resources. The program advisory committee should:

- examine classroom, laboratory, equipment and operating supplies, maintenance support, textbooks and other instructional materials
- assess the instructor's qualifications to teach the skills outlined in the student performance standards
- determine if the student/instructor ratio will permit accomplishment of instructional goals.

Developing Your Plan

The examinations and evaluations mentioned in the Suggestions section are a good starting point for beginning this activity. Your plan of action for curriculum implementation should proceed from assessment reports made by the committee. If any part of the program—facilities, equipment, texts, instructors—is found to be inadequate for meeting instructional objectives, there are several actions that can be taken. As representatives of the local business community, your committee advisors are uniquely suited for these tasks.

- Seek donations of equipment or materials from local companies, trade organizations, even civic groups.
- Arrange for business and industry to provide state-of-the-art upgraded training for instructors in special sessions or in-service work days.
- Find volunteer guest instructors or lecturers for in-school activities.
- Organize field trips.
- Investigate the possibility of incorporating instructors and equipment from other programs into segments of your instruction (as in the marketing ed instructor example of the Case Story).
- Write letters and schedule meetings with school administrators and county officials to convince them to reexamine budget priorities and allocate needed resources. The advisory committee will often be far more effective at this than the instructor alone.

Case Story

The nursery operations instructor at St. Petersburg Vocational-Technical Institute had a problem. The Florida student performance standards were geared to large-scale horticultural production training. The curriculum was more suitable for a rural vo-tech center than for an urbanized area like Pinellas County. Local needs called for a different approach, so the instructor and his advisory committee engineered a retail garden center program. Together they created a mock-up of a real retail nursery operation complete with plants, tools, and plant-care products. The program planners recognized that successful implementation of the new curriculum would have to include more than horticulture training. A marketing education instructor was added to monitor student progress in sales, merchandising, advertising, inventory control, and purchasing.

Much of the program's success can be attributed to the active advisory committee. The members arranged for the donation of all garden center equipment by local business. The committee, along with other nursery industry representatives, was also responsible for proposing extended instruction hours as a way to provide more access for full-time workers seeking to expand their training. The flexible 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. scheduling also allows current students to take advantage of part-time employment opportunities.

The implementation efforts have not been limited to advice and donations. The St. Petersburg program gained a much-needed fence thanks to committee members' letters to county officials, proving the worth of a strong committee when resources are needed. For more information: Department of Agriculture Education, St. Petersburg Vocational-Technical Institute, 901 34th St. South, St. Petersburg, FL 33711-2298.

V. Plan Instructional Strategies

Introduction

As a vocational/occupational educator, your knowledge and experience will be the most valuable asset in this activity. The goal here is to work with the program advisory committee to select the best instructional methods and to determine ways your committee members can help you implement them. Successful partnership action should result in a training program that makes the best use of resources, accomplishes its goals in the allotted time, and utilizes learning activities designed to meet the needs and abilities of students.

Suggestions

The instructional plan you choose will depend on many things: the occupational area, the abilities of students, your available resources, and the objectives and curriculum of the program. Among the strategies you might consider are those that:

- provide for frequent positive reinforcement of previously learned skills and knowledge
- use time efficiently
- provide realistic job experience to the extent practical
- emphasize troubleshooting skills and creative and critical thinking
- encourage student attendance and program completion
- prepare students for employment as interdependent members of work teams.

Developing Your Plan

The strategies listed under Suggestions are good general objectives that you can adapt to your program. You should combine your teaching experience with the input of committee members to come up with more ideas of that type. For each strategy listed, the group should answer the following questions:

- What is the best way to put this into practice?
- How can the advisory committee help implement this?

For example, one of your strategies may be to provide realistic job experience for your students. One approach would be to have the learning environment simulate the actual work place. Committee members can be a great source of information, facility designs, even equipment and materials. Suppose, however, it would be impractical to make the training facility resemble the job site more closely. You may decide that cooperative education plans and on-the-job training are the best way to implement the strategy. In this case, the business and industry representatives on your committee will be best able to make the necessary arrangements.

Case Story

The advisory committee for the warehousing program at Jacksonville's Westside Skills Center was active even before an instructor was hired. The committee had been organized by the county's Marketing and Distributive Education Supervisor to help create a program that would provide well-trained employees for this seaport city's large shipping and warehousing industry. The members had done a detailed task analysis and were ready to assist the instructor in planning the curriculum.

The instructional strategy developed by this business and education partnership combines learning with realistic work experience. The facility is a fully operational warehouse for the school's supplies. Students are trained in the full range of warehouse activities from ordering through receiving to "selling" (i.e., shipping requisitioned items to various Center departments). The course also includes instruction in computerized inventory maintenance.

The committee is still very active. The members review the curriculum on a continuing basis and give advice on any program changes the instructor wants to make. For more information: Principal, Westside Skills Center, 7450 Wilson Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32210.

VI. Develop Procedures for Determining the Effectiveness of Instruction

Introduction

Perhaps the best measure of the effectiveness of instruction is in the evaluation of student performance. If your students are succeeding in their efforts, then you can reasonably conclude that your instruction is effective. By no means, however, is this a guaranteed method of self-evaluation. To be certain, you must have a method of performance testing which measures competencies and related skills based on real-work situations.

Advisory committee members can contribute to the validity of performance testing by actively taking part in the development of tests. This is a natural part of the follow-through on the instructional plan they have helped to develop. As a result, they are assured that program completers possess the necessary skill level to function on the job.

Suggestions

You, the instructor, can evaluate student performance by means of:

- oral presentations
- homework
- research papers
- lab exercises
- chapter and course written tests
- performance and manipulative tests.

The advisory committee can participate in this activity by:

- advising educators about the competencies that should be examined
- judging and setting the standards for skills competitions
- providing information and assistance concerning occupational licensing procedures and requirements.

Developing Your Plan

The following are some preliminary tasks you and your committee can undertake to determine instructional effectiveness:

- Evaluate exams, lab exercises, and workbooks to see if they are testing the student for the competencies required for successful job performance.
- Study the possible causes of student failure and determine ways the committee can help educators eliminate them.
- Solicit ideas for events in which students can demonstrate their skills to business and industry personnel.

Case Stories

Two cases are presented here to show the different ways program advisory committees contribute to performance evaluation. The first story is about the cosmetology program at Lively Vo-Tech Center in Tallahassee. Students have a chance to compete in hair-

styling, manicuring, and skin care at skills events scheduled throughout the year. The active committee members give input on the performance guidelines and act as judges for the events. For more information on these competitions: Director, Lively Area Vocational-Technical Center, 500 North Appleyard Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32304.

At Okaloosa-Walton Community College in Niceville, an active advisory committee has brought about changes in welding-program testing procedures. Prior to committee input, all welds were examined using "destructive" methods (i.e., breaking the weld apart to inspect it). The committee suggested looking into nondestructive methods and equipment, such as x-ray. By testing the weld without breaking it apart, the instructor can spot previously unnoticed flaws that would not be acceptable in job practice. The new examinations more effectively test the student's ability to function in the industry. You can read more about this program and committee in Activity 10.

VII. Plan Student Placement Strategies

Introduction

Preparing students to get jobs is no doubt one of the program objectives you identified in Activity I. Meeting this goal means more than training students and then letting them "loose" in the job market. It also means developing strategies to help newly trained potential employees find rewarding work in their chosen field. An effective placement plan is crucial to the success of the program and the school; funding for vocational/occupational education greatly depends on the number of program completers who find jobs.

The program advisory committee should complement the school's placement system with actions of its own. An effective plan will earn for your program a high reputation as a supplier of skilled employees for local business and industry. A program with a successful placement rate increases its prestige among potential students, education officials, and local business people.

Suggestions

- The program advisory committee will help students get part-time jobs while still in school.
- The committee will help students find permanent full-time work upon completion of their skill training.
- Program instructors and school personnel will make students aware of further educational opportunities and will encourage promising students to continue their education.
- Cooperative education programs will be developed.

Developing Your Plan

Before beginning any plan of its own, the committee should review the school's job placement system—its methods, its successes, and its shortcomings. Invite the school's occupational or career specialist to discuss placement at one of your meetings. This will provide a good background for partnership action and help the group focus on what it can do.

Interaction between committee members and students should be encouraged whenever possible; the committee is always the program's best link to the business world. The business and industry representatives on your committee can be a valuable resource for the school's career guidance center, providing information on the types and number of employees needed locally and throughout the state. In addition, members can use their positions in the business community to organize some of the placement-related activities listed below.

- Employer receptions (e.g., luncheons, banquets) give students the chance to mingle with prospective employers. A local company, business group, or civic organization may be willing to sponsor one.

- Field trips expose students to real job situations and acquaint employers with the potential labor force.
- Guest lectures and classroom visits by business and industry personnel are good opportunities for students to ask career questions.
- "Career Day" events can be organized in cooperation with the school administration and other programs and advisory committees. At these open house gatherings, representatives from local companies are present to provide information and answer questions concerning jobs in their occupational field.

Case Story

With an area of just over five square miles, the rather isolated island of Key West has a limited supply of workers. The shortage is particularly striking among hotel and restaurant employees. Working with her advisory committee, the hotel/restaurant administration instructor at Florida Keys Community College came up with a way to satisfy the placement needs of her students and of local businesses.

The committee members helped her develop a flexible work/study plan that filled job vacancies and gave her students practical experience. The plan allows students to schedule full-time classes and to work approximately 20 hours per week in local restaurants and hotels. The students rotate their work places every couple of weeks or so in order to benefit from a variety of job situations. Potential employers also get to work with a large segment of their future full-time labor force.

The committee members represent all phases of the hospitality industry, from hotels to fast food outlets, from local independents to major chains. Their advice and action have helped the program in a number of ways. For more about this: Office of the President, Florida Keys Community College, Key West, FL 33040.

VIII. Assess Overall Program Effectiveness

Introduction

At this point all previous activities will have been implemented. It is time now to go back over the plan of action you have developed to see if it is working. This activity is intended to initiate an ongoing "quality control" process to determine if the stated goals and objectives of the program are being met.

No matter how good a program is, it needs to be monitored and refined with the continued help of the advisory committee. Stress to your members how essential their participation is throughout the life of the program. The success of Partners in Program Excellence and of your vocational/occupational program depends on their contributions to the reevaluation and modification process.

Suggestions

Activities VIII and IX are very tightly interwoven. The goal is to review the objectives and actions your group has developed up to this point, to assess their effectiveness in attaining the goals of the program, and to modify the program and your plan of action accordingly. One suggestion for accomplishing this is to examine each objective identified in Activity I.

For example, let's say the objective is to provide specialized, up-to-date training in skills needed for work in local business and industry. The committee can determine how well the program is meeting this objective by finding out how many program completers are now working in industry. The major employers of your school's graduates can be questioned regarding their satisfaction with the training provided. The committee could also talk to several recent graduates to see how well the program prepared them for their jobs. If local companies are generally satisfied with the quality of training but still hire very few people from your school, it might be necessary to turn your attention to the placement strategies to see if they are effective. Once you have determined what works, what doesn't, and why, you can move on to Activity IX where you will make the necessary improvements.

Developing Your Plan

The Suggestions give you an idea of approaches to assessing program effectiveness. The committee should develop similar methods for evaluating each phase of the instructional plan. Review the program goals and objectives to determine if each is being achieved. If some aspect is not working as intended, determine the problem by examining each point of the previous activity outlines—curriculum proposals, public relations tasks, student placement plan, and instructional strategies. Use the Plan of Action form to track committee reassessment actions.

Case Story

The South Brevard Electronics Advisory Committee is a very active group serving four area high schools. The committee has met monthly since its founding in 1986. As part of their first year project, the members reviewed the secondary school electronics programs and found a heavy emphasis on theory at the expense of manipulative skills. They discovered that even those high school students who completed the training were not considered employable by local firms. The students lacked the technician-level and assembly skills customarily offered only in postsecondary programs. The instruction was clearly falling short of the goal to provide skills training that would meet the labor needs of area employers. The committee elected to devise a new curriculum outline to improve the employability of students. After reviewing the assembly skills duty lists provided by area manufacturers, they compiled a task list from which intended outcomes for the program were derived. (The preparation and submission of these proposals more properly belongs under Activity IX.)

Because of the committee's work, the Department of Education has now extended the electronics assembly program to the secondary school level for the 1988-89 school year. Combined with a cooperative education component, the new program will offer greater employment options for high school graduates. For more information: Director of Vocational Education, School Board of Brevard County, 1274 South Florida Ave., Rockledge, FL 32955.

IX. Identify and Plan Needed Program Modifications

Introduction

The next step after assessment is to make the changes needed to improve program effectiveness. This is also a part of the ongoing quality control process, not a one-time activity. Even the best planned and operated program will have to undergo change as technology advances, new business methods develop, and new needs become important. The Case Story gives an example of a successful program that had to be modified to meet new working conditions.

Suggestions

We will continue the example given in Activity VIII. The committee has concluded its assessment and found that only a small percentage of program completers have been hired by local companies. The members have learned from employers that new employees have the right skills for entry-level work but lack the critical judgment and troubleshooting ability to handle many of the problems that arise during the work day. The company managers claim that it is too costly and time-consuming to pull veteran employees away from their regular duties in order to help the less-seasoned workers. For this reason, the companies have hired from outside the community more frequently in the last two years. Reports from recent graduates have confirmed these findings. Therefore, the committee decides to reassess the curriculum content and propose the addition of specific troubleshooting competencies.

Developing Your Plan

Your actions here should follow on the heels of those from Activity VIII. Once you have determined what areas need improving, you can discuss ways to make those improvements. As you develop your plan, look at the objectives and strategies you identified earlier. Were the initial expectations too high? What can be done to make the instruction more effective?

The Plan of Action form can help you organize your efforts here. The results of investigations from the last activity become the key to your improvement goals in this one. They can be listed as the purposes for each of the actions undertaken to make program modifications.

Case Story

The head of the Practical Nursing, Allied Health, and Cosmetology Department at Erwin Vo-Tech in Tampa is justifiably enthusiastic about her program advisory committee. She has had many occasions to draw on the committee's expertise. The members, representing every hospital and nursing home in the area, give their input and approval on any changes she proposes for the licensed practical nursing program.

Recent developments in the health care field called for review and modification of the nursing curriculum. Committee members helped instructors establish policies and training to deal with the rise in AIDS cases. Using their suggestions and information, the Centers for Disease Control's infection control guidelines were applied to the program and policies were tailored to the school's needs and circumstances. For more information: Director, Hillsborough County School of Practical Nursing, David G. Erwin Area Vocational-Technical Center, 2010 East Hillsborough Ave., Tampa, FL 33610.

X. Submit Program Progress Summary

Introduction

In this step the program advisory committee will summarize the progress of the program and of the committee's actions. This written summary, prepared by the advisory committee chairperson and submitted to educational administrators after the implementation of the nine previous activities, is an effective way to bring about program changes and statewide improvements. It is also the most direct way for members to influence the education system. The summary represents the committee's advisory position in the program's operation. Administrators at various levels, who have the authority to make program changes, will have a working document on which to base decisions.

Suggestions

These are examples of the major areas that need to be reviewed when making program progress summaries.

- Propose additional or updated equipment and other resources needed to teach program competencies.
- Recommend necessary changes to curriculum frameworks and student performance standards.
- Identify technical updating needs of instructor (correlated to student performance standards).

Developing Your Plan

The method and format of your progress summary will be determined by you, your committee members, and the particular needs and circumstances of your program. Your program report should include recommendations for the three areas listed in the Suggestions section. You may wish to develop a checklist to organize your evaluation of these three areas. After making the assessment, a representative of the program advisory committee (preferably the chairperson) should write a concise but thorough summary of the committee's conclusions for presentation to the school administration.

Case Story

The work of the program advisory committee serving the welding program at Okaloosa-Walton Community College is a perfect example of an advisory committee's ability to bring about improvements with progress summaries. The committee took part in a pilot study of a newly designed business and industry technical review. Committee members formed the core of a panel that included other local industry representatives. The panel reviewed the program objectives, syllabus and curriculum outlines, facilities, and equipment. They also interviewed currently enrolled students as well as program completers and their employers. The review was beneficial in two ways—the information gathered led to proposals for new instructional resources, equipment, and technical updating and the committee was able to help shape future review processes.

As a result of the panel's report, the welding program is being revamped to provide more locally relevant training. Prior to this, the program offered two courses in oxy-acetylene methods. The reviewers recommended converting one of them to arc-welding, a technique more common now in industry. To facilitate the conversion, the committee priced arc-welding stations and submitted expansion estimates to administrators. The report also proposed the use of "nondestructive" testing methods (see Activity VI) and stressed the need for updating instructors in these new techniques.

In addition to improving the program, the summary process expanded and strengthened the advisory committee. One of the panel of reviewers was an industry representative who was inspired by this action to become a member; soon other people from local companies began to express interest in program improvement. And committee members were pleased to be affecting education at a higher level; the program changes resulting from their report reinforced their commitment and participation. According to the welding instructor, "If my committee members have a definite task and can see some value to it, they don't care how much time and work they give." To learn about this exemplary action: Occupational Dean, Okaloosa-Walton Community College, 100 College Blvd., Niceville, FL 32578.

Appendix A:
Working Effectively With the Program Advisory Committee

The Members

The membership of your committee may already be well established. In most cases, it is not the instructor's responsibility to appoint new members. Nevertheless, you can encourage the appointment of people who will contribute to effective action for your program's benefit.

It is best to involve people from all areas of the occupational field. Not every member can be expected to be active at all times or have expertise in all areas. A good mix of people with various backgrounds helps ensure that your committee will remain active and prepared to face all the challenges of program improvement. You may want to consider the following people and the advantages of having them serve on the committee:

- *Management Personnel* are good sources of information about business trends and employment needs. They may be in the best position to obtain private industry resources and assistance for the program.
- *Small Business Owners* can provide support and encouragement for entrepreneurship skills and opportunities.
- *Technicians and Craft Workers* are most qualified to review curriculum, equipment, and facilities. They can advise you on the skills most needed in local jobs and on the design and function of the job site.
- *Public Relations and Marketing Specialists* can take the lead in promotional and recruitment activities.
- *Members of Trade and Professional Associations* are connected to their industries throughout the state and nation; they often have political and lobbying experience that may come in handy.
- *Former Instructors and School Administrators* have years of experience in the educational system and understand the needs and problems of vocational and occupational training programs.
- *Students and Parents* should be strongly considered for membership. Traditionally, they have been left out of program advisory committees. Yet they are also stakeholders in the future of education. They are the best source of information and advice about their needs, expectations, and problems.

Planning Committee Meetings

Most of the decisions concerning the partnership activities will be conducted during program advisory committee meetings. Therefore, a well-planned meeting is crucial to achieving the goals of the PIPE system.

The first step in planning is the preparation of an agenda. The agenda is more than a mere list of topics to be discussed; it should help focus and clarify the business at hand. Members will soon lose interest in a meeting that wanders from topic to topic or that drags on for hours.

You and your committee members will decide the organizational guidelines of the committee and the format for meetings. Usually a member, rather than the instructor, will chair the committee. That member will conduct the meetings and prepare the agenda (perhaps with the help of another member designated as secretary). However, it is probably best for you, the instructor, to lead the discussion of program improvement. The activity format of this handbook is designed to facilitate this work. You should be sure that whoever prepares the agenda schedules time for these activities.

The following are some basic objectives for planning a meeting and preparing an agenda:

1. Schedule the meeting so that a majority can attend.
2. Determine the objectives in advance and organize the meeting around what you hope to accomplish.
3. List topics to be discussed and decisions to be made.
4. Follow up on discussions and projects initiated at previous meetings by including progress reports on:
   a. tasks undertaken by individual members
   b. decisions made by school administrators regarding committee proposals
   c. program changes that have been implemented.
5. Include any background information needed to begin a new activity.
6. Send the agenda out far enough in advance of the meeting so that members have plenty of time to propose additions and deletions. This increases their involvement in the process and gains their support.

The following samples are suggestions for preparing an agenda. The first is an example for an initial program advisory committee meeting. The second agenda assumes the committee has already been meeting and developing a plan of action. Both plans make use of the PIPE activity format.

Automotive Mechanics Program Advisory Committee Meeting

Central Area Vocational-Technical Center
Room 132 Industrial Programs Complex
October 19, 1988
7:00 p.m.

Agenda

7:00–7:30 p.m.

Welcome

Introduction of new members

Review of agenda

Purposes of Meeting: to introduce members to Partners in Program Excellence system and to develop a plan of action for first PIPE activity (identifying & updating program objectives)

PIPE: Introduction/Orientation
Slide/Tape presentation (10 minutes)
Explanation of system and advisory committee roles & responsibilities (brochure)
Brief discussion

7:30–8:30 p.m.

Activity I: Identifying and updating objectives of the vocational/occupational program
Explanation of activity
Review handbook suggestions
Plan of action
Case story

8:30–9:00 p.m.

Summary of meeting

Date, time, location of next meeting

Nursery Operations Program Advisory Committee

Community Vocational-Technical Center
Room 12 Administration Building
September 2, 1987 7:30 p.m.

Agenda

Welcome

Introduction of new committee member, _____

Introduction of school officials and guests present

Minutes of last meeting

Report by _____ on implementation of committee proposal to extend instruction hours to 9 p.m.

Report by _____ on progress made in securing cooperative work opportunities for nursery operations students

Initiation of PIPE activity: Planning Student Placement Strategies

- Talk by _____, electronics program instructor, about success of placement activities in that program
- Report by _____ on history of placement strategies in nursery program
- Discussion and proposals

Review of objectives, discussion, and decisions of meeting

Date, time, location for next meeting

Conducting Meetings

The following outline will help you and the committee chairperson make the best use of your meeting time.

1. Explain and discuss all information, issues, and topics.
   a. Explain and define as necessary all terms, concepts, and methods particular to vocational/occupational education.
   b. Be clear and helpful but not condescending in your explanations.
   c. Give or solicit concise summaries of all reports, discussions, and decisions.
2. Maintain a balance between informality and structure.
   a. Use parliamentary procedure to facilitate decision making.
   b. Encourage free, open discussion leading to consensus.
   c. Decide how much leadership the group needs in order to work efficiently.
   d. Set limits on discussion time.
   e. Ask speakers to explain and clarify when necessary, but do so with respect and consideration for their feelings.
3. Seek suggestions, solutions, and alternatives.
   a. Solicit as many ideas and suggestions as possible. Rely on the experience and information of the advisory committee members; their insights and contributions are essential to program improvement.
   b. Offer comments that direct the discussion to the task at hand.
   c. Respect the opinions and ideas of the advisory committee as equal partners in the system. This enhances the feeling of worth in each member and gains group approval for a plan of action.

Tips for a Successful Partnership

Advisory committee members voluntarily give their time and expertise to the vocational/occupational program. The school should give recognition and support to them in return. The following are ways to encourage and reward partnership service:

- Clearly define the goals and activities of the PIPE system and the role and responsibilities of partnership. The Partners in Program Excellence brochure is a good source for this information.
- Provide full information about the program and the school. When members have complete background material they are able to make knowledgeable suggestions and decisions.
- Encourage interaction between committee members and students. Arrange open meetings, invitations to classroom sessions, job-site visits.
- Prepare timely reports regarding action taken by school administrators on each committee recommendation. Inform members if the suggestion has been implemented, modified, or declined; always provide a full explanation of the decision.

- Recognize members during special dinners or awards ceremonies with plaques or certificates of appreciation and by publishing their names in school catalogs, program announcements, or press releases. Publicizing your partnership and the community leaders who are part of it brings recognition to the vocational/occupational program and the school and enhances the success and status of Partners in Program Excellence.
- Keep meetings relaxed and pleasant by providing coffee, refreshments, and other comforts for your committee members.

Appendix B:
Forms and Transparency Masters

Plan of Action Form

Activity:					
Task	**Purpose**	**Who**	**When**	**Follow-up**	**Results**

Sample Plan of Action Form

Activity: V. PLAN INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Task	Purpose	Who	When	Follow-up	Results
1. Investigate cooperative education opportunities	To provide real job experience	John Menendez & Ted Wang	by 9/88	7/15/88 - Met with representatives from Harn Southeast, Harbro Electronics, Barnes-Millian, + DVZ	8/10/88 - Harn and Harbro will each set up five 15 hour/week co-op positions beginning: 9/20/88 (Harn) and 10/4/86 (Harbro)
2. Find guest lecturers to demonstrate system-breakdown investigation procedures	To emphasize troubleshooting skills	PAM MARTIN	for next semester (WINTER 89)	6/30/88 - Called Luther Weeks, personnel officer at Bo-CAL for recommendations. In process of contacting possible lecturers	7/30/88 - David Lewis, chief millwright at Bo-CAL, INC., will conduct 6 classes in Jan. + Feb. 1989.

TM 1

Objectives of the Partners in Program Excellence System

- to set goals at the school and program level
- to guide instructors and advisory committees in generating plans for vocational/occupational program improvement
- to promote a more active role for members of local program advisory committees
- to provide a model for interaction between educators and representatives of business and industry
- to encourage continued involvement in program development activities

TM 2

Advantages of Using the Partners in Program Excellence System

- provides a means for business and industry involvement in *all* areas of program improvement
- provides organization and coordination for committee action
- provides encouragement for ongoing involvement and a structure of continuity
- provides a system for direct local action in program improvement

The Ten Partners in Program Excellence System Activities

1. Identify the major objectives of the program.
2. Develop a public relations and marketing plan.
3. Plan and implement curriculum.
4. Determine capability to implement curriculum.
5. Plan instructional strategies.
6. Develop procedures for determining the effectiveness of instruction.
7. Plan student placement strategies.
8. Assess overall program effectiveness.
9. Identify and plan needed program modifications.
10. Submit program progress summary.

Benefits of Advisory Committee Action for Program Improvement

- Training is updated to current business and industry standards.
- Students interact with prospective employers.
- Business and industry gain a source for skilled employees.
- Vocational/occupational program is responsive to the needs of the community.
- The technical updating needs of instructors are met.

State of Florida
Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida
Betty Castor, Commissioner
Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education

AD 420 BK 88